

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

*Varanus tristis* at Peak Charles — On 24 April 1984 three adult specimens of *Varanus tristis* (Schlegel 1839) were observed active on granite with lithic vegetation on Peak Charles. A second visit during 5-8 April 1985 produced another three adult specimens. The first was active on granite, the second was beneath a granite slab on granite with the third being inside a hollow tree limb among an open *Eucalyptus* woodland near the east base of Peak Charles. In addition to this other specimens have been collected by Paul Orange of Kambalda East south to Widgiemooltha. *Varanus tristis* inhabits most of Western Australia but Storr *et al.* (1983. *Lizards of Western Australia II, Dragons & Monitors*) records it as absent from the far south, i.e. south of Perth, Narembeen and Kalgoorlie. Peak Charles is ca 200 kilometres southeast from the nearest previously known locality (Chapman and Dell, 1985. *Rec. West. Aust. Mus.* 12: (1) 1-46). A number of photographs were taken of one specimen to establish a positive identification. This was confirmed by John Dell of the Western Australian Museum.

— BRAD MARYAN, South Perth, W.A. 6151

Feeding Behaviour of Grey Currawong (*Strepera versicolor*) — At 6.00 a.m. on 4th February 1988, I drove into the Bluff Knoll car park in the Stirling Range National Park. As I parked, I was surprised to see two Grey Currawongs come running across the tarmac towards me. They disappeared, then suddenly the whole car rocked to a succession of crashes and bangs. The birds were taking insects from the chassis. By lying on my back, I could see that they searched every possible place, even jumping up onto the tyres and the engine block to remove insects from the radiator and underneath the bonnet. Is this type of opportunistic feeding behaviour common in currawongs?

I also noted that, of the four birds that eventually arrived, three had damage to an eye. At first I thought that this might be related to the practice of getting very close to car engines, but, after one retrieved a melon rind from the rubbish bin, the ensuing squabble revealed a more likely cause. They pecked violently — not at the rind — but at each other's head, until one carried its prize to safety beneath a dense bush.

— PENNY HUSSEY

A Range Extension of the Skink *Lerista lineata* — *Lerista lineata* is a small semi-fossorial lizard previously recorded only from sandy *Banksia* woodland on the coastal plain between the Swan and Serpentine/Murray river systems. This limited distribution has resulted in it being gazetted as "rare, or otherwise in need of special protection".

On 28 August 1987 during a fauna survey of a proposed development area (32° 40' 00"S, 115° 36' 30"E) adjacent to the northern limits of Yalgorup National Park a single adult specimen was found in an abandoned nest of the Stick-nest Ant *Iridomyrmex conifer*. The surrounding vegetation was a low heath of *Grevillea thelemanniana* and *G. crithmifolia* with emergent *Eucalyptus marginata* and *Banksia attenuata*. The soil was a shallow, aeolian sandy loam with limestone exposures.

This recent record represents a southern range extension of about 15 km but more importantly, shows that the Murray River does not act as a geographic barrier.

There is a record of a specimen in the W.A. Museum (R 9621) from West Busselton (33° 40'S, 115° 25'E) about 100 km further south.

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